



[4910-13-P]

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. FAA-2015-0674; Directorate Identifier 2014-SW-019-AD]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Helicopters Deutschland GmbH (Previously Eurocopter Deutschland GmbH) Helicopters

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

SUMMARY: We propose to supersede airworthiness directive (AD) 2014-05-06 for certain Eurocopter Deutschland GmbH (ECD) (now Airbus Helicopters Deutschland GmbH) Model EC135 and MBB-BK 117 C-2 helicopters to correct an error. AD 2014-05-06 currently requires inspecting the flight-control bearings repetitively, replacing any loose bearing with an airworthy flight-control bearing, and installing bushings and washers. This proposed AD would require the same actions. This proposed AD results from the discovery of an error in the compliance time for AD 2014-05-06. These proposed actions are intended to prevent the affected control lever from shifting, contacting the helicopter structure, and reducing control of the helicopter.

DATES: We must receive comments on this proposed AD by [INSERT DATE 60 days AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

ADDRESSES: You may send comments by any of the following methods:

- Federal eRulemaking Docket: Go to <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the online instructions for sending your comments electronically.

- Fax: 202-493-2251.

- Mail: Send comments to the U.S. Department of Transportation, Docket Operations, M-30, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590-0001.

- Hand Delivery: Deliver to the “Mail” address between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

Examining the AD Docket

You may examine the AD docket on the Internet at <http://www.regulations.gov> or in person at the Docket Operations Office between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. The AD docket contains this proposed AD, the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) AD, the economic evaluation, any comments received and other information. The street address for the Docket Operations Office (telephone 800-647-5527) is in the ADDRESSES section. Comments will be available in the AD docket shortly after receipt.

For service information identified in this proposed AD, contact Airbus Helicopters, Inc., 2701 N. Forum Drive, Grand Prairie, TX 75052; telephone (972) 641-0000 or (800) 232-0323; fax (972) 641-3775; or at <http://www.airbushelicopters.com/techpub>. You may review service information at the FAA, Office of the Regional Counsel, Southwest Region, 2601 Meacham Blvd., Room

663, Fort Worth, Texas 76137. It is also available on the Internet at <http://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2015-0674.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Matt Fuller, Senior Aviation Safety Engineer, Safety Management Group, Rotorcraft Directorate, FAA, 2601 Meacham Blvd., Fort Worth, Texas 76137; telephone (817) 222-5110; email matthew.fuller@faa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Comments Invited

We invite you to participate in this rulemaking by submitting written comments, data, or views. We also invite comments relating to the economic, environmental, energy, or federalism impacts that might result from adopting the proposals in this document. The most helpful comments reference a specific portion of the proposal, explain the reason for any recommended change, and include supporting data. To ensure the docket does not contain duplicate comments, commenters should send only one copy of written comments, or if comments are filed electronically, commenters should submit only one time.

We will file in the docket all comments that we receive, as well as a report summarizing each substantive public contact with FAA personnel concerning this proposed rulemaking. Before acting on this proposal, we will consider all comments we receive on or before the closing date for comments. We will consider comments filed after the comment period has closed if it is possible to do so without incurring expense or delay. We may change this proposal in light of the comments we receive.

Discussion

On February 20, 2014, we issued AD 2014-05-06, Amendment 39-17779 (79 FR 13196, March 10, 2014), for certain ECD (now Airbus Helicopters Deutschland GmbH) Model EC135 and MBB-BK 117 C-2 helicopters. AD 2014-05-06 requires inspecting the flight-control bearings repetitively, replacing any loose bearing with an airworthy flight-control bearing, and installing bushings and washers. AD 2014-05-06 was prompted by the discovery of loose flight control bearings because of incorrect installation. This condition, if not corrected, could result in the affected control lever shifting, contacting the helicopter structure, and reducing control of the helicopter.

Actions Since AD 2014-05-06 Was Issued

Since we issued AD 2014-05-06 (79 FR 13196, March 10, 2014), we discovered an error regarding the compliance time for certain model helicopters. Paragraph (e)(1)(i) should have required that certain actions be accomplished within the next 100 hours time-in-service or at the next annual inspection, whichever occurs first. However, we omitted the word “first” from that sentence, which changes the meaning of the required compliance time.

Also since we issued AD 2014-05-06, ECD changed its name to Airbus Helicopters Deutschland GmbH. This proposed AD reflects that change and updates the contact information to obtain service documentation.

FAA’s Determination

These helicopters have been approved by the aviation authority of Germany and are approved for operation in the United States. Pursuant to our bilateral agreement with Germany, EASA, its technical representative, has notified us of the unsafe condition described in its AD. We are proposing this AD because we evaluated all known relevant

information and determined that an unsafe condition is likely to exist or develop on other products of the same type design.

Related Service Information under 1 CFR part 51

ECD, now called Airbus Helicopters, has issued Alert Service Bulletin (ASB) MBB BK117 C-2-67A-010, Revision 3, dated February 8, 2010, and ASB EC135-67A-019, Revision 3, dated December 16, 2009. These ASBs specify:

- Within the next 50 flight hours (FHs), inspecting the affected bearings and, if necessary, rebonding any affected bearings or replacing the lever assembly.
- Within 12 months, retrofitting bushings and washers on the levers to prevent movement of the bearings.
- After the retrofit, repeating the inspection every 800 FHs or 36 months for the Model EC135 helicopters, whichever comes first, and 600 FHs or 24 months, whichever comes first, for the Model MBB-BK 117 C-2 helicopters.

EASA classified these ASBs as mandatory and issued AD No. 2010-0058 to ensure the continued airworthiness of these helicopters. This service information is reasonably available because the interested parties have access to it through their normal course of business or by the means identified in the ADDRESSES section of this NPRM.

Proposed AD Requirements

For Airbus Model EC135 P1, P2, P2+, T1, T2, and T2+ helicopters this proposed AD would require:

- Within the next 100 hours time-in-service (TIS) or at the next annual inspection, whichever occurs first, modifying the left-hand (LH) and right-hand (RH) guidance units

and the cyclic shaft by installing bushings and washers to prevent shifting of the bearings in the axial direction.

- At intervals not to exceed 800 hours TIS or 36 months, whichever occurs first, inspecting the bearings in the LH guidance unit, RH guidance unit, cyclic control, upper guidance unit, and linear voltage differential transducer plate for play. If any bearing is loose, replacing the affected bearing with an airworthy bearing.

For Model MBB–BK 117 C–2 helicopters, this proposed AD would require:

- Within the next 100 hours TIS or at the next annual inspection, whichever occurs first, modifying the LH and RH guidance units and the lateral control lever by installing bushings and washers to prevent shifting of the bearings in the axial direction.

- At intervals not to exceed 600 hours TIS or 24 months, whichever occurs first, inspecting the bearings in the RH guidance unit, LH guidance unit, and lateral control guidance unit for play. If any bearing is loose, replacing the affected bearing with an airworthy bearing.

Differences Between this Proposed AD and the EASA AD

Differences between this proposed AD and the EASA AD are:

- The EASA AD is applicable to the EC 635 helicopter, whereas this proposed AD is not because the EC 635 helicopter is not type certificated in the U.S.

- The EASA AD requires an initial inspection within 50 flight hours or one month, whichever occurs first after May 31, 2008, and a modification within the next 12 months. This proposed AD would require the modification within 100 hours TIS or at the next annual inspection, whichever occurs first, and no inspection until after the modification has been accomplished.

- The EASA AD applies to all EC135 and MBB-BK 117 C-2 helicopters, while this proposed AD would apply to certain serial-numbered Model EC135 and Model MBB-BK 117 C-2 helicopters, as recommended by the appropriate ECD ASB.

Costs of Compliance

We estimate that this proposed AD would affect 175 Model EC135 and 112 Model MBB-BK 117 C-2 helicopters of U.S. Registry and that labor costs would average \$85 per work-hour. Based on these estimates, we expect the following costs:

- For EC135 helicopters, it would take about 32 work-hours to perform the modification. Parts would cost about \$312. The total cost for the modification would be about \$3,032 per helicopter and \$530,600 for the U.S. operator fleet. The repetitive inspections would require 6.5 work-hours for a cost of about \$553 per helicopter and about \$96,775 for the fleet per inspection cycle.

- For MBB-BK 117 C-2 helicopters, it would take about 32 work-hours to perform the modification. Parts would cost about \$396. The total cost for the modification would be \$3,116 per helicopter and \$348,992 for the U.S. operator fleet. The cost for the repetitive inspections thereafter would be about \$85 per helicopter and \$9,520 for the fleet per inspection cycle.

Authority for This Rulemaking

Title 49 of the United States Code specifies the FAA's authority to issue rules on aviation safety. Subtitle I, section 106, describes the authority of the FAA Administrator. "Subtitle VII: Aviation Programs," describes in more detail the scope of the Agency's authority.

We are issuing this rulemaking under the authority described in “Subtitle VII, Part A, Subpart III, Section 44701: General requirements.” Under that section, Congress charges the FAA with promoting safe flight of civil aircraft in air commerce by prescribing regulations for practices, methods, and procedures the Administrator finds necessary for safety in air commerce. This regulation is within the scope of that authority because it addresses an unsafe condition that is likely to exist or develop on products identified in this rulemaking action.

Regulatory Findings

We determined that this proposed AD would not have federalism implications under Executive Order 13132. This proposed AD would not have a substantial direct effect on the States, on the relationship between the national Government and the States, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities among the various levels of government.

For the reasons discussed, I certify this proposed regulation:

1. Is not a “significant regulatory action” under Executive Order 12866;
2. Is not a “significant rule” under the DOT Regulatory Policies and Procedures (44 FR 11034, February 26, 1979);
3. Will not affect intrastate aviation in Alaska to the extent that it justifies making a regulatory distinction; and
4. Will not have a significant economic impact, positive or negative, on a substantial number of small entities under the criteria of the Regulatory Flexibility Act.

We prepared an economic evaluation of the estimated costs to comply with this proposed AD and placed it in the AD docket.

List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 39

Air transportation, Aircraft, Aviation safety, Incorporation by reference, Safety.

The Proposed Amendment

Accordingly, under the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the FAA proposes to amend 14 CFR part 39 as follows:

PART 39 - AIRWORTHINESS DIRECTIVES

1. The authority citation for part 39 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 106(g), 40113, 44701.

§ 39.13 [Amended]

2. The FAA amends § 39.13 by removing Airworthiness Directive (AD) 2014-05-06, Amendment 39-17779 (79 FR 13196, March 10, 2014), and adding the following new AD:

Airbus Helicopters Deutschland GmbH (Previously Eurocopter Deutschland GmbH): Docket No. FAA-2015-0674; Directorate Identifier 2014-SW-019-AD.

(a) Applicability

This AD applies to the following helicopters, certificated in any category:

(1) Model EC135 P1, P2, P2+, T1, T2, and T2+ helicopters, serial number (S/N) 0005 through 00829, with a tail rotor control lever, part number (P/N) L672M2802205 or L672M1012212; cyclic control lever, P/N L671M1005250; collective control lever assembly, P/N L671M2020108; or collective control plate, P/N L671M5040207; installed; and

(2) Model MBB-BK 117 C-2 helicopters, S/N 9004 through 9310, with a tail rotor control lever assembly, P/N B672M1007101 or B672M1807101; tail rotor control

lever, P/N B672M1002202 or L672M2802205; or lateral control lever assembly, P/N B670M1008101, installed.

(b) Unsafe Condition

This AD defines the unsafe condition as incorrectly installed flight control bearings. This condition could cause the affected control lever to shift and contact the helicopter structure, resulting in reduced control of the helicopter.

(c) Affected ADs

This AD supersedes AD 2014-05-06, Amendment 39-17779 (79 FR 13196, March 10, 2014).

(d) Comments Due Date

We must receive comments by [INSERT DATE 60 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE Federal Register].

(e) Compliance

You are responsible for performing each action required by this AD within the specified compliance time unless it has already been accomplished prior to that time.

(f) Required Actions

(1) For Model EC135 P1, P2, P2+, T1, T2, and T2+ helicopters:

(i) Within the next 100 hours time-in-service (TIS) or at the next annual inspection, whichever occurs first, modify the left-hand (LH) and right-hand (RH) guidance units and the cyclic shaft by installing bushings and washers to prevent shifting of the bearings in the axial direction as follows:

(A) Remove and disassemble the LH guidance unit and install a bushing, P/N L672M1012260, between the bearing block and the lever of the LH guidance unit as

depicted in Detail A of Figure 5 of Eurocopter Alert Service Bulletin EC135–67A–019, Revision 3, dated December 16, 2009 (EC135 ASB).

(B) For helicopters without a yaw brake, remove and disassemble the RH guidance unit and install a bushing, P/N L672M1012260, between the bearing block and the lever as depicted in Detail B of Figure 5 of EC135 ASB.

(C) Remove and disassemble the cyclic shaft and install a washer, P/N L671M1005260, between the bearing block and the lever as depicted in Detail C of Figure 6 of EC135 ASB.

(D) Remove the collective control rod from the bellcrank and install a washer, P/N L221M1042208, on each side of the collective control rod and bellcrank as depicted in Detail D of Figure 6 of EC135 ASB.

(E) At intervals not to exceed 800 hours TIS or 36 months, whichever occurs first, inspect the bearings in the LH guidance unit, RH guidance unit, cyclic control, upper guidance unit, and linear voltage differential transducer plate for play. If any bearing is loose, replace the affected bearing with an airworthy bearing.

(2) For Model MBB–BK 117 C–2 helicopters:

(i) Within the next 100 hours TIS or at the next annual inspection, whichever occurs first, modify the LH and RH guidance units and the lateral control lever by installing bushings and washers to prevent shifting of the bearings in the axial direction as follows:

(A) Remove and disassemble the RH guidance unit and install a bushing, P/N L672M1012260, between the lever and the bracket as depicted in Detail B of Figure 4 of Eurocopter Alert Service Bulletin MBB BK117 C–2–67A–010, Revision 3, dated

February 8, 2010 (BK117 ASB). Remove and disassemble the LH guidance unit and install a bushing, P/N L672M1012260, between the lever and the bracket as depicted in Detail C of Figure 4 of BK117 ASB.

(B) Remove the lateral control lever and install new bushings in accordance with the Accomplishment Instructions, paragraphs 3.C(9)(a) through 3.C(9)(g), of BK 117 ASB.

(C) Identify the modified lever assembly by writing “MBB BK117 C-2-67A-010” on the lever with permanent marking pen and protect with a single layer of lacquer (CM 421 or equivalent).

(D) Apply corrosion preventive paste (CM 518 or equivalent) on the shank of the screws and install airworthy parts as depicted in Figure 5 of BK117 ASB.

(E) At intervals not to exceed 600 hours TIS or 24 months, whichever occurs first, inspect the bearings in the RH guidance unit, LH guidance unit, and lateral control guidance unit for play. If any bearing is loose, replace the affected bearing with an airworthy bearing.

(g) Alternative Methods of Compliance (AMOCs)

(1) The Manager, Safety Management Group, FAA, may approve AMOCs for this AD. Send your proposal to: Matt Fuller, Senior Aviation Safety Engineer, Safety Management Group, Rotorcraft Directorate, FAA, 2601 Meacham Blvd., Fort Worth, Texas 76137; telephone (817) 222-5110; email matthew.fuller@faa.gov.

(2) For operations conducted under a 14 CFR part 119 operating certificate or under 14 CFR part 91, subpart K, we suggest that you notify your principal inspector, or lacking a principal inspector, the manager of the local flight standards district office or

certificate holding district office before operating any aircraft complying with this AD through an AMOC.

(h) Additional Information

The subject of this AD is addressed in European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) AD No. 2010-0058, dated March 30, 2010. You may view the EASA AD on the Internet at <http://www.regulations.gov> in Docket No. FAA-2015-0674.

(i) Subject

Joint Aircraft Service Component (JASC) Code: 6710, Main Rotor Control.

Issued in Fort Worth, Texas, on March 18, 2015.

Lance T. Gant,

Acting Directorate Manager, Rotorcraft Directorate,
Aircraft Certification Service.

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